

Home news

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

DR. FELIX CALONDER.

On the 15th of this month the Geneva Convention between Poland and Germany, concerning Upper Silesia has expired, and the post of High Commissioner, which our compatriot, Dr. Calonder, occupied for the last 16 years, has become extinguished.

Dr. Calonder was born on the 7th of December 1863 in Schuls (Grisons), he studied law at the University of Zurich. At an early age he entered the Grand Council of his native canton and later represented the canton of Grisons in the States Council. (Ständerat) From 1913-1920 he was a member of the Federal Council. On the occasion of the recent retirement from his high office, both the German and Polish Governments expressed their high appreciation for the distinguished services, which he has rendered.

(Dr. Calonder is well-known to the Swiss Colony, being an Honorary member of the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Mercantile Society. Ed.)

NEW HIGH COMMANDS IN THE SWISS ARMY.

The Federal Council has accepted the recommendations of the "Landesverteidigungskommission" with regard to nominations to the commands of the Army units, created by the new organisation. The commands will come into force at the end of this year.

- 1st Division:** Colonel-of-Division Combe, at present in command of the division.
- 2nd Division:** Colonel-of-Division Borel, at present commander of the 3rd Division.
- 3rd Division:** Colonel von Graffenried, at present commander of the Mountain Brigade 5.
- 4th Division:** Colonel Scherz, at present commander of the Mountain Brigade 9.
- 5th Division:** Colonel-of-Division Bircher, at present commander of the 4th Division.
- 6th Division:** Colonel Constam, at present commander of the "Zentral Schulen" II.
- 7th Division:** Colonel-of-Division Lardelli, at present commander of the 6th Division.
- 8th Division:** Colonel Gübeli, at present commander of the Infantry Brigade 13.
- 9th Division:** Colonel-of-Division Tissot, at present commander of the Gott-hard Fortress.
- Mountain Brigade 10:** Colonel Schwarz, at present commander *ad int.* of the St. Maurice Fortress.
- Mountain Brigade 11:** Colonel Bühler, at present Chief-of-Staff of the 3rd Division.
- Mountain Brigade 12:** Colonel Hold, at present commander of the Mountain Infantry Brigade 18.

New to the high commands are: Colonels von Graffenried, Scherz, Constam, Gübeli, Schwarz, Bühler and Hold.

Colonel René von Graffenried.

Colonel von Graffenried was born in 1886 in Berne. During the Frontier occupation he was principally attached to the General-Staff. In 1919 he was promoted to major in which capacity he commanded the Mountain Infantry battalion 15.

(Fribourg.) In 1925 he advanced to lieutenant-colonel, acting as Chief-of-Staff of the 2nd Division, and four years later (1929) he was appointed commander of the Mountain Infantry regiment 10. On his promotion in 1931, to colonel, he received the command of the Mountain Infantry Brigade 5.

Colonel Walter Scherz.

Colonel Scherz was born in Aeschi. (Ct. Solothurn) in 1886. During his military career he held the following commands: 1920, commander of the Infantry battalion 28 (Berne); 1929, commander of the mountain Infantry regiment 18. On his promotion to a colonelship he was chief-of-staff of the 3rd Division (1931-32) and later on commander of the mountain Infantry Brigade 9.

Colonel Herbert Constam.

Colonel Constam was born in 1885 at Zurich, he entered the Federal Instruction Corps in 1911. After having served several years on the General-Staff he was appointed to the command of the "Mitrailleuse Abtg." 4. He was promoted to Lieutenant-colonel in 1925, and held successively the posts of chief-of-staff of the 4th and 5th division, and later on commander of the mountain Infantry regiment 29. In 1931, on his advancement to colonel he took over the command of the mountain Infantry Brigade 15, which command he held until 1935. At present Colonel Constam is chief of the "Zentral Schulen."

Colonel Alfred Gübeli.

Colonel Gübeli was born in 1885 at Goldingen (St. Gall), he saw service mostly on the General-Staff. In 1921, on his promotion to major he commanded the artillery section 22; on reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel he was entrusted with the command of the Field Artillery regiment 10. From 1932-1935 he was chief of staff of the 5th division. At present Colonel Gübeli is at the head of the Zurich Infantry Brigade 13.

THE NEW MOUNTAIN BRIGADE COMMANDERS.

Colonel Julius Schwarz, at present commander of the St. Maurice Fortress, is to take over the 10th mountain Brigade. Colonel Schwarz is a member of the Federal Instruction Corps and was born in 1887 in Winterthur. As a major he commanded the heavy Howitzer Section 1, and as lieutenant-colonel the heavy artillery regiment 1. In 1933 he was promoted to the rank of colonel and appointed chief of artillery of the 1st Army-Corps. Three years later he received the command of the Fortress of St. Maurice.

Colonel Hans Bühler, from Frutigen, born in 1888, has been entrusted with the command of the mountain Brigade 11, he is at present chief-of-staff of the 3rd Division. From 1925-27 he commanded the mountain battalion 10; in 1930, the mountain Infantry regiment 18, since 1933 he holds the post of chief-of-staff of the 3rd division.

The command of the mountain Brigade 12, has been given to Colonel Hans Hold, who is a

member of the Federal Instruction Corps. Colonel Hold hails from Arosa and was born in 1886, he was in turn commander of the mountain Infantry battalion 91, mountain Infantry regiment 36 and mountain Brigade 18.

SWISS PROFESSOR HONOURED.

The University of Oxford has conferred the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on M. Emil Brunner, Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich.

ALLEGED SPY ARRESTED.

A German resident, whose name has not been disclosed, has been arrested by the Swiss federal police on a charge of political espionage. The accused man has been taken to Berne, where he will shortly be tried.

LEGACIES.

The late Mme. Cora Emma Goldschmied-Biedermann from Winterthur has left an amount of 282,000 frs. to various charitable institutions. M. Ad. Graf in Trogen, who recently died has left the sum of 60,000 frs. to the community of Teufen. M. Adolf Fröhlich, a late master-butcher in Frauenfeld bequeathed 20,000 frs. to charitable institutions.

COLONEL-OF-DIVISION J. VON MURALT.

Colonel J. von Muralt, commander of the 5th division, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. Colonel von Muralt is one of the best-known military leaders in Switzerland.

SWISS EMIGRATION.

During the first six months of 1937 almost double the number of Swiss have emigrated to Foreign countries than during the same period in 1936, namely 1,613 instead of 886.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. Wilhelm Werdenberg from Allschwil (Basle-Country) has been appointed Manager of the Municipal Electricity works in Winterthur.

* * *

In Zurich died at the age of 73, M. Josef Benziger-Mader, President of the Board of the well-known Publishing firm Benziger & Co. at Einsiedeln.

At Zurich-Affoltern died M. Johannes Greutmann, the oldest inhabitant of the town of Zurich, at the age of 96.

* * *

M. Kurt Vogt, Insurance-Manager in Zurich, his wife and sister-in-law, Mme. Paula Furrer, were seriously injured when their car collided with a tree in the vicinity of Frankfurt a.Oder.

* * *

Dr. Julius Maurer, late Director of the Federal Metrological Office in Zurich, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary, he enjoys an international reputation as a great scientist.

* * *

The University of Zurich has conferred the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on M. Emil Brunner, Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich.

BERNE.

Dr. A. Wander, head of the firm Dr. A. Wander, A. G. in Berne, and the many Wander concerns, best-known as the makers of "Ovaltine" all over the world, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

Dr. Wander was born in Berne in 1867, the son of Dr. Georg Wander, the founder of the present concern. After having attended the schools in Berne, he studied Chemistry and Pharmacology at the Universities of Berne, Zurich and Geneva. Later on he visited Universities in Denmark, Italy and England.

Apart from his great achievements in the business sphere, he has been a generous benefactor, and numerous are his bequests for scientific and charitable purposes. Dr. Wander is a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Berne. (Medical Faculty.) We are wishing him "Many happy returns of the day."

* * *

Colonel Hermann Schwytzer. "Eidg. Oberpferdearzt" is shortly retiring from his post, for reasons of health; he was born in 1878 and entered in 1901 the Federal Veterinary Dept. In 1928, on the retirement of colonel Buser, he was appointed head of the Federal Veterinary Office.

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* * *
Dr. Richard Feller, Professor of History at the University of Berne, has been elected by the senate as rector.

* * *
Professor R. Burri, head of the bacteriological office at Liebefeld—Berne has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Dr. Burri holds the degrees of *doctor honoris causa* of the Universities of Berne and Syracuse. (U.S.A.)

* * *
M. Fritz Ingold, a former teacher of gymnastics in Burgdorf has died at the age of 70. The deceased was an honorary member of the Federal and Cantonal Association of Gymnasts.

BASLE.

The Senate of the University of Lüttich has conferred the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on Dr. Robert Bing, Professor of the University of Basle.

BASLE-COUNTRY.

Dr. Straumann, a member of the National Council from 1911-1919 has celebrated his 75th birthday. During the late war, Dr. Straumann was surgeon-in-chief of the "Etappen & Territorial Dienst."

GRISONS.

At Pontresina died at the age of 76, Mme. Anna Kessler, the well-known "Bergwirtin" of the Morteratsch glacier.

VAUD.

The Federal Court of Justice in Lausanne has appointed Dr. Ulisse Rezzonico from Lugano, as Secretary of the Federal Supreme Court, in succession to Dr. Pometta, who has recently been appointed to a Judgeship at the Federal Court. Dr. Rezzonico was hitherto legal adviser to the General Management of the Swiss Federal Railways.

A CITADEL OF NEUTRALITY.

The Swiss Citizen Army.

(The Times.)

(Continued.)

Rhine Crossings.

The wider manoeuvre has a larger promise, but the more the problem is studied the more the prospects would seem to depend on the surprise of an unprepared opponent — on crossing not only the Rhine but the hill-belt before any opposition was offered. Apart from the possibility of seizing the bridges, there are several points along the Rhine where a surprise crossing is feasible. Between Rheinfelden and Sackingen the bend of the river forms a projecting salient for a pincer-like attack; to the east there are smaller salients opposite Waldshut and Kadelburg; and some miles west of Waldshut there are several places where the river becomes very narrow. It would be unwise to ignore the possibility of a night crossing at such places, made with no appreciable warning. And, in these circumstances, a mobile force might reach the central plateau beyond Olten within a couple of hours after leaving the Rhine.

Hitherto such a possibility has existed, so long as the stroke was attempted when the Swiss Army was unmobilized. For during the greater part of the year no trained troops have been available to offer resistance in the frontier zone. From November to January there were no men with the Colours, and from then until August only schools of recruits. The Frontier guards, a force of only some 1,800 men, can hardly be counted when its tiny size is measured against the length of the Swiss frontiers: it represents a scale of rather less than one man for each kilometre. Until now the Swiss have really trusted for their security against strategic surprise to rapidity of mobilization, which could be completed in two days. This is helped by the far-reaching decentralization of equipment arrangements. And it is being reduced for the troops near the frontier to a matter of hours from the moment the order comes from Berne. But it is questionable whether even this is quick enough, especially as it might suffer interference from the air, unless there is some force to hold the hill-belt and delay the invaders.

At the present time the Swiss Army is in process of large reorganization and re-equipment, following the new National Defence Act of 1936. In place of the existing six divisions of the cumbersome pre-War type (with 18 battalions apiece) there will be nine divisions of a handier kind and three independent mountain brigades, more suitably distributed. One division covers the eastern frontier near Lake Constance, three cover the Rhine frontier, two cover the Jura frontier. Besides these "cover" divisions, two form a central reserve around Berne and Lucerne respec-

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Dr. Louis C. Vauthier in Leysin, founder of the University sanatorium has celebrated his 50th birthday anniversary. During the last 15 years, Dr. Vauthier has rendered great services to this institution.

GENEVA.

The Zoological Gardens in Geneva have opened a bear pit.

PERSONAL.

We express our deep sympathy to Mr. John Jenny Managing-Director of the Plaza Hotel and "Gruyere Cheese" Restaurant in St. Martin's Street, on the death of his mother, which occurred in Baar (Zug) at the age of 70.

HELVETIA CLUB

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tively, ready to march in any direction. The ninth provides the garrison for the St. Gotthard fortifications, facing south, and has an extra mountain brigade as an outpost down in the Ticino. Of the three independent mountain brigades one is in the Grisons, one in Valais covering the Simplon, and one garrisoning the St. Maurice fortifications which block the Rhone valley above the Lake of Geneva.

Mixed Policy.

The divisional artillery has been reduced and the corps artillery increased so that artillery support can be given more flexibly according to the needs of the moment. Each division will also have a motorized company of nine 47mm. infantry guns for anti-tank purposes; and a divisional reconnaissance group, to consist of a squadron of dragoons, a company of cyclists, and a detachment of four light tanks; a mixture which does not impress one as a very workable combination.

A similar mixed policy is being followed in converting the three cavalry brigades into light brigades, for rapid reinforcement of the frontier troops. Each of these will comprise two light regiments (each of three cavalry squadrons and a cyclist battalion) and three motorized companies (one of light machine-guns, one of 47mm. infantry guns, and one of sappers). A section of armoured cars may be added.

The air arm is being increased to provide a first-line strength of nearly 300 machines of new types, built in Swiss factories, while an even larger proportion of the defence loan is being devoted to ground defence. Apart from the multiplication of anti-aircraft artillery, coupled with a network of observation and listening posts, the passive defence of the civilian population has been elaborately organized and some 26,000 specialists are in training for this function.

At Short Notice.

The most significant feature of the new organization is perhaps the formation of special frontier defence brigades, ready to man at short notice the chain of small fortified works which are being built behind the Rhine frontier throughout its whole length, and at the passes through the Jura in the north-west and the Alps in the south. A close veil of secrecy has been drawn over their construction, and many of the by-roads in the frontier districts are now closed to tourists. Hitherto there have been only a few scattered works on the Austrian border, near Sargans, in the Ticino, and on the Simplon, apart from the two important fortress systems on the Gotthard and at St. Maurice, which are permanently occupied by skeleton garrisons; they were developed, after the establishment of the Triple Alliance in the eighties, to meet the danger of a junction between the Italian and German armies in Swiss territory.

The new frontier defence brigades will be equipped with a high proportion of anti-tank guns and light machine-guns, as well as with

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their own artillery. They will be composed of trained men (not only of the first line) whose homes are on the spot, so that they can take up their positions within an hour or two of being warned. Even this measure might not provide security against a stroke that came as a complete surprise, especially if such a stroke was preceded by an infiltration of picked men disguised as ordinary civilians and assigned the role of seizing some of the key points of the defensive line. As a further safeguard it is now proposed to raise a special frontier force of some 6,000 men, voluntarily enlisted, to provide permanent garrisons for the line of defence.

The High Level.

The Swiss are thus being brought to recognize, reluctantly, the advisability of some departure from the strictly militia form of their forces. The increases in the length of service which have already been adopted are another symptom of change.

And even these do not go far enough to satisfy many concerned with the defence problem. The cause of doubt lies in the militia system itself, rather than in any inefficiency of application.

Apart from the disadvantage of not having a force permanently available, it yields a remarkably good result in the military preparation of the troops. Helped by their long-standing military tradition, the high level of education among the people, and the way that a man's military duties are adjusted to his civil experience wherever possible, the Swiss pick up the elements of soldiership more quickly than could be expected in other countries. Among the officers, too, tactical sense and administrative capacity are better developed than in many professional armies. It is rather in the more specialized military technique, and in the smooth functioning which comes from habit, that the handicaps of the Swiss system are apt to be felt. They are inevitably becoming more marked under modern conditions, where the means and methods of warfare are becoming more complex.

Whether they are a dangerous handicap is doubtful. Because of the essentially defensive role of the Swiss forces and the way the territory lends itself to defence, what the Army lacks in technical efficiency may be largely compensated by the inherent superiority of defence over attack in present-day warfare. And the country's prospect for the defence of neutrality might be still further improved if the training, organization, and action of the forces were more fully adjusted to, and more definitely concentrated on, the defensive role.

But a survey of the problem of Switzerland in the light of the current trend of warfare does not encourage the idea that her system is suitable for export to a country such as ours, where its natural assets would be lacking and its defects more pronounced, owing to the greater range and variety of the factors in Britain's problem of Imperial defence.

The End.